The May Queen.

by

Alfred Tennyson.

Illuminated by

L. Summerbell.

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Alfred Tennyson

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E. Summerbell.

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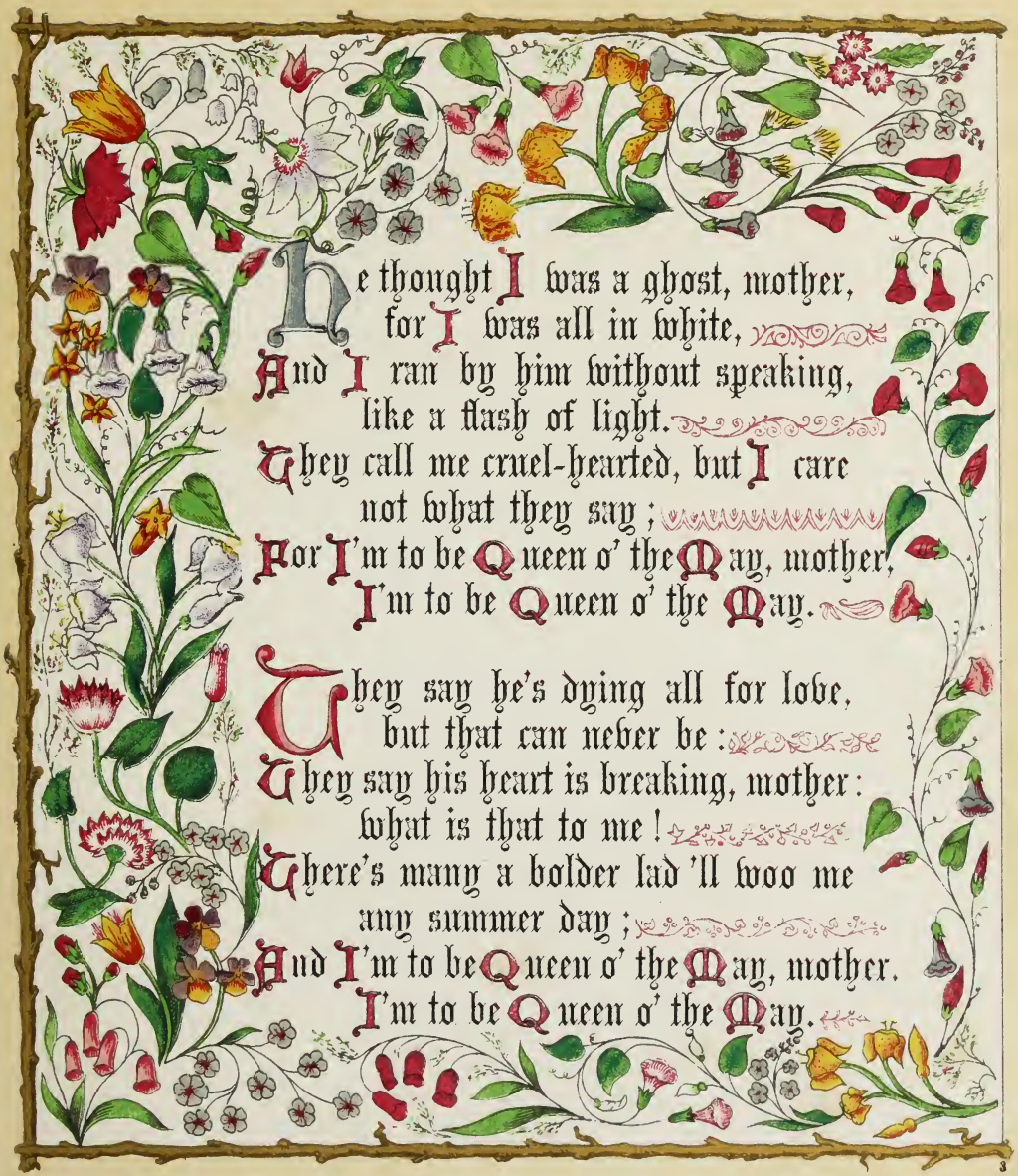
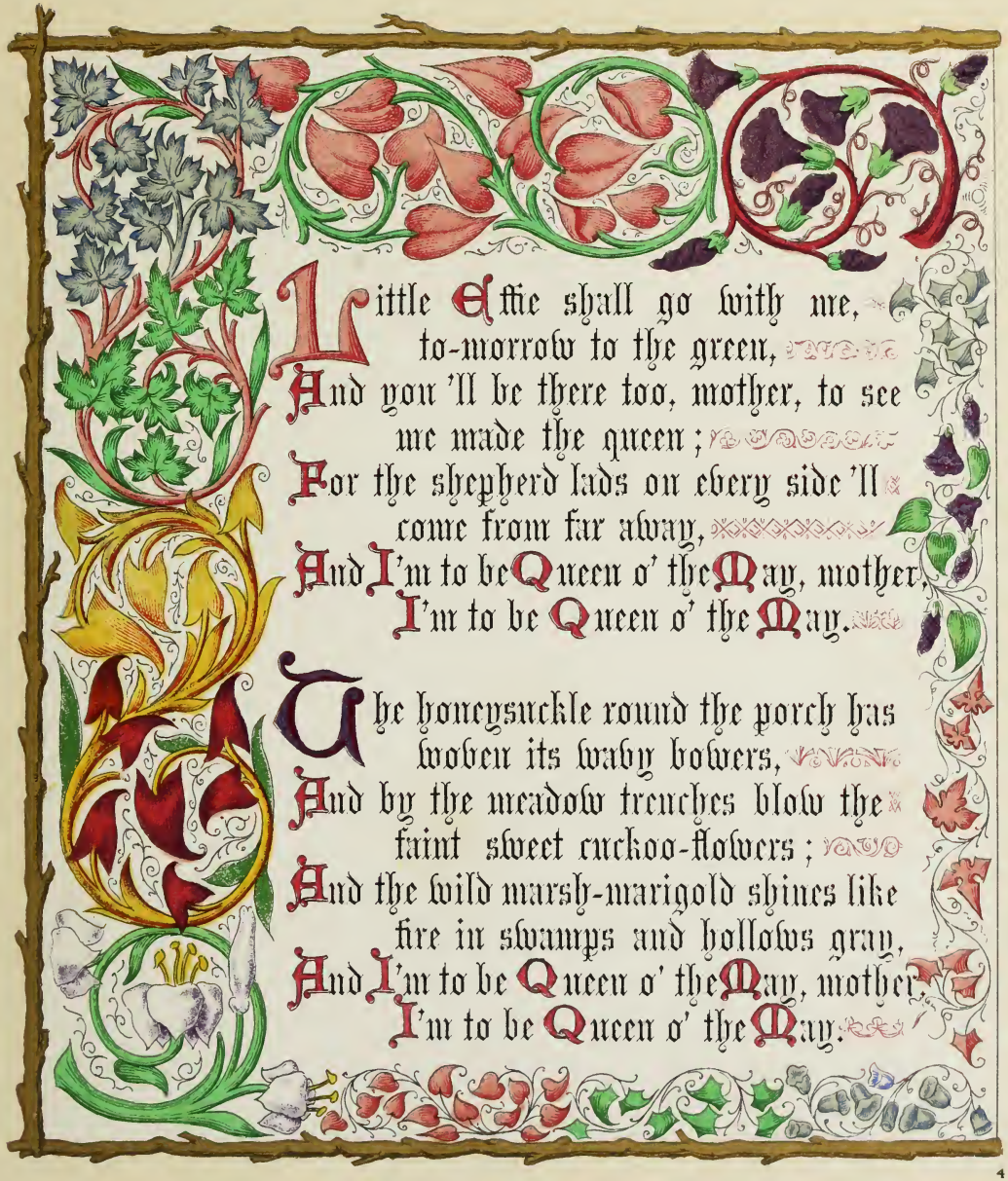
You must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear;
To-morrow'll be the happiest day of all the glad New-Year;
Of all the glad New-Year, mother, the maddest, merriest day;
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother.
I'm to be Queen o' the May.
There's many a black black eye they say, but none so bright as mine;
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caroline:
But none so fair as little Alice in all the land they say,
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.


He thought I was a ghost, mother,
for I was all in white,
And I ran by him without speaking,
like a flash of light.
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care
not what they say;
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.
They say he's dying all for love,
but that can never be:
They say his heart is breaking, mother:
what is that to me!
There's many a bolder lad 'll woo me
any summer day;
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother.
I'm to be Queen o' the May.


Little Effie shall go with me,
to-morrow to the green,
And you 'll be there too, mother, to see
me made the queen;
For the shepherd lads on every side 'll
come from far away,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.
The honeysuckle round the porch has
woven its waby bowers,
And by the meadow trenches blow the
faint sweet cuckoo-flowers;
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like
fire in swamps and hollows gray,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother,
that I shall neber wake,
If you do not call me loud when the day
begins to break:
But I must gather knots of flowers, and
buds and garlands gay,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

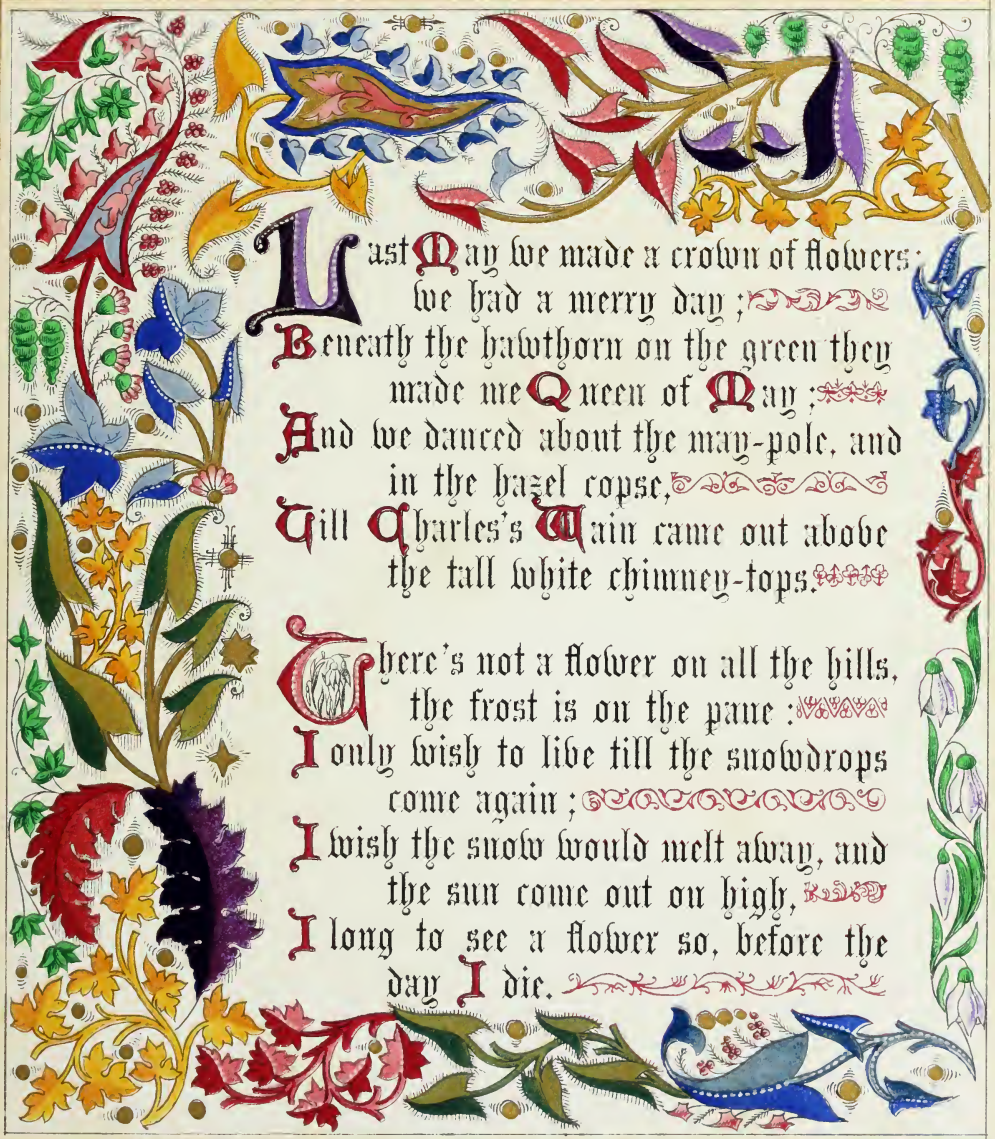
As I came up the balley whom think
ye should I see,
But Robin, leaning on the bridge
beneath the hazel tree?
He thought of that sharp look, mother,
I gabe him yesterday,
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

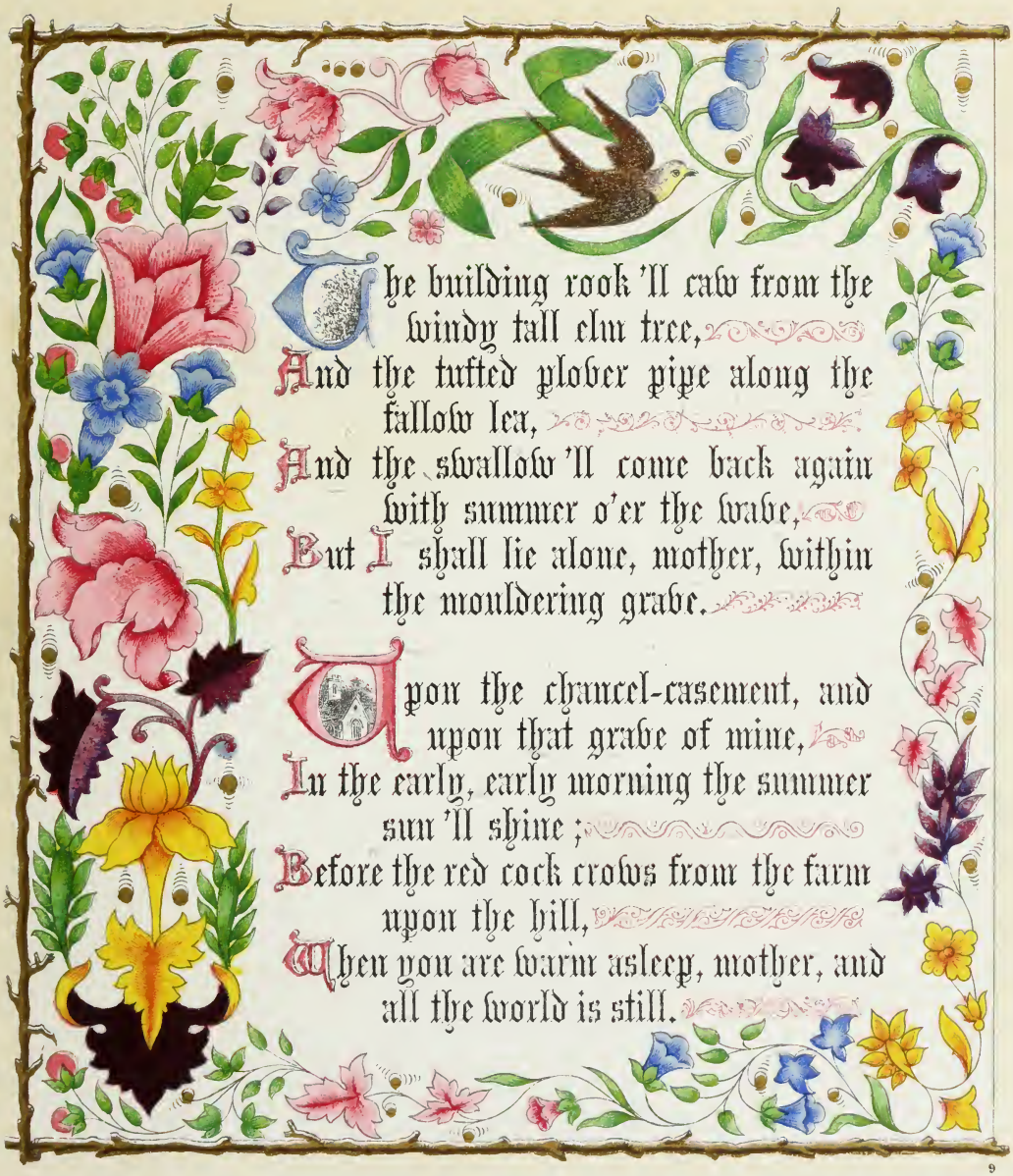
The night winds come and go, mother,
upon the meadow grass,
And the happy stars above them seem
to brighten as they pass;
There will not be a drop of rain the
whole of the livelong day;
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother.
I'm to be Queen o' the May.
All the valley, mother, 'll be fresh
and green and still,
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are
over all the hill,
And the rivulets in the flowery dale 'll
merrily dance and play;
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early,
call me early, mother dear,
To-morrow 'll be the happiest time of all
the glad New-Year:
To-morrow 'll be of all the year the
maddest, merriest day,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

If you're waking call me early, call
me early mother dear,
For I would see the sun rise
upon the glad New-year;
It is the last New-year, mother, that
I shall ever see,
When you may lay me low i' the mould,
and think no more of me.

o-night I saw the sun set, he set
and left behind
The good old year, the dear old time,
and all my peace of mind;
And the new year's coming up, mother,
but I shall never see
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf
upon the tree.


Last May we made a crown of flowers:
we had a merry day;
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they
made me Queen of May;
And we danced about the may-pole, and
in the hazel copse,
Till Charles's Wain came out above
the tall white chimney-tops.
There's not a flower on all the hills,
the frost is on the pane:
I only wish to live till the snowdrops
come again;
I wish the snow would melt away, and
the sun come out on high,
I long to see a flower so, before the
day I die.


The building rook 'll caw from the
windy tall elm tree,
And the tufted plover pipe along the
fallow lea,
And the swallow 'll come back again
with summer o'er the wabe,
But I shall lie alone, mother, within
the mouldering grabe.
Upon the chancel-casement, and
upon that grabe of mine,
In the early, early morning the summer
sun 'll shine;
Before the red cock crows from the farm
upon the hill,
When you are warm asleep, mother, and
all the world is still.

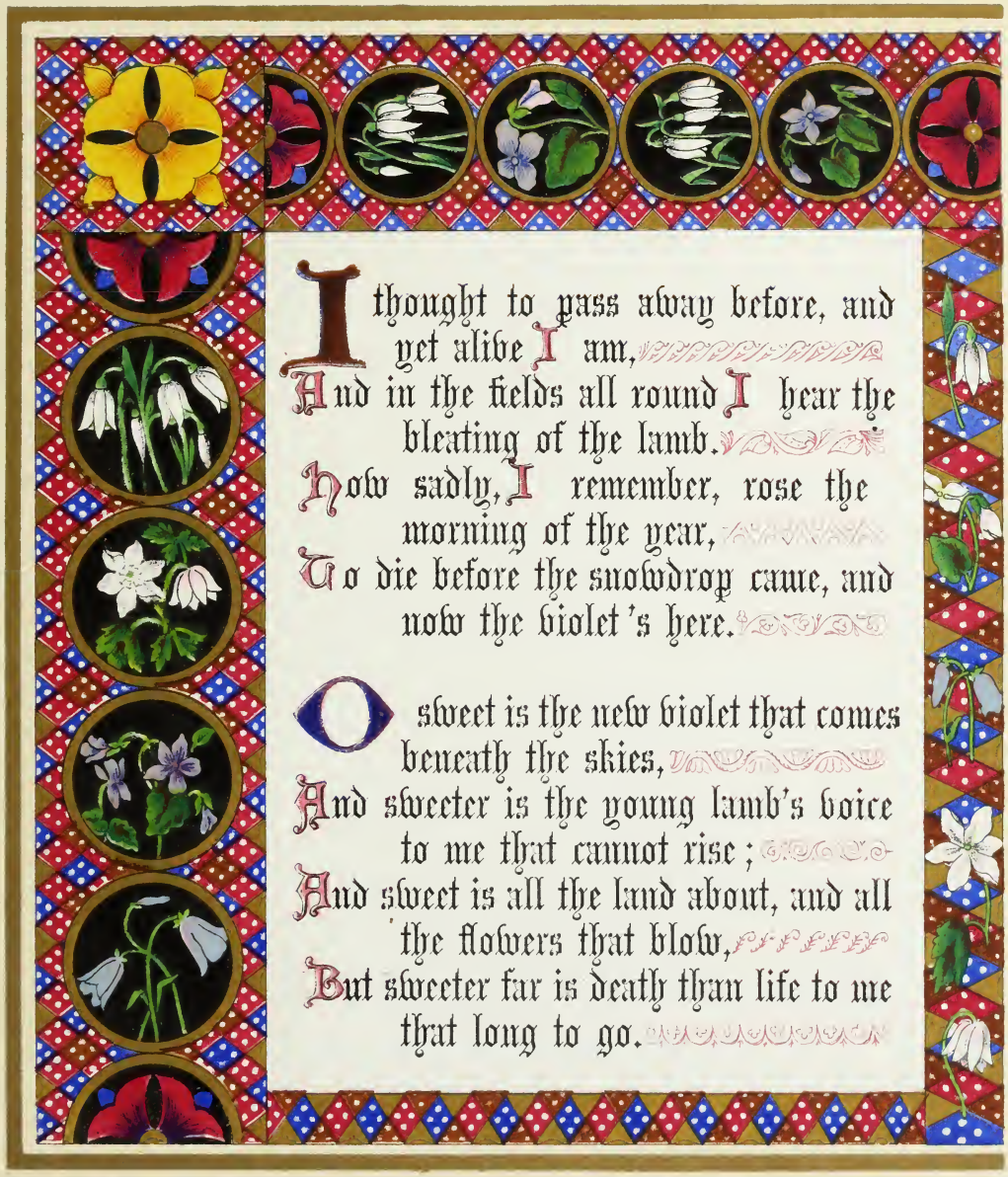
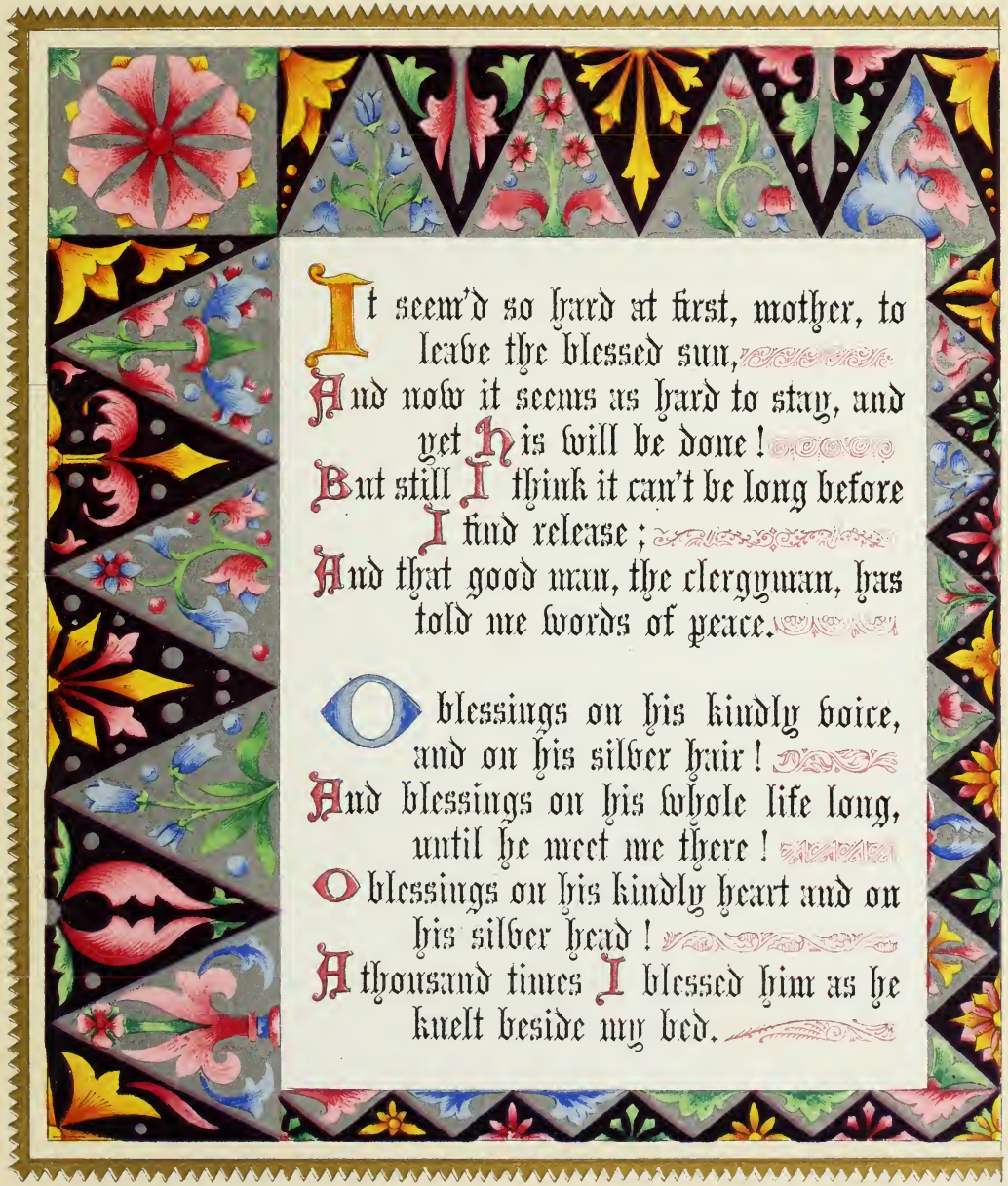
When the flowers come again, mother,
beneath the waning light,
You'll never see me more in the long
gray fields at night;
When from the dry dark wold the summer
airs blow cool
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and
the bulrush in the pool.
You'll bury me, my mother, just
beneath the hawthorn shade,
And you'll come sometimes and see me
where I am lowly laid.
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall
hear you when you pass,
With your feet above my head in the
long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but
you'll forgive me now;
You'll kiss me, my own mother, and
forgive me ere I go;
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let
your grief be wild,
You should not fret for me, mother,
you have another child.
If I can, I'll come again, mother,
from out my resting-place,
Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall
look upon your face;
Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall
hearken what you say,
And be often, often with you, when you
think I'm far away.

Good-night, good-night, when I have
said good-night for evermore,
And you see me carried out from the
threshold of the door;
Don't let Effie come to see me till my
grave be growing green:
She'll be a better child to you than
I have ever been.

She'll find my garden tools upon
the granary floor:
Let her take 'em, they are hers: I shall
never garden more:
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the
rose-bush that I set
About the parlour-window and the box
of mignonette.

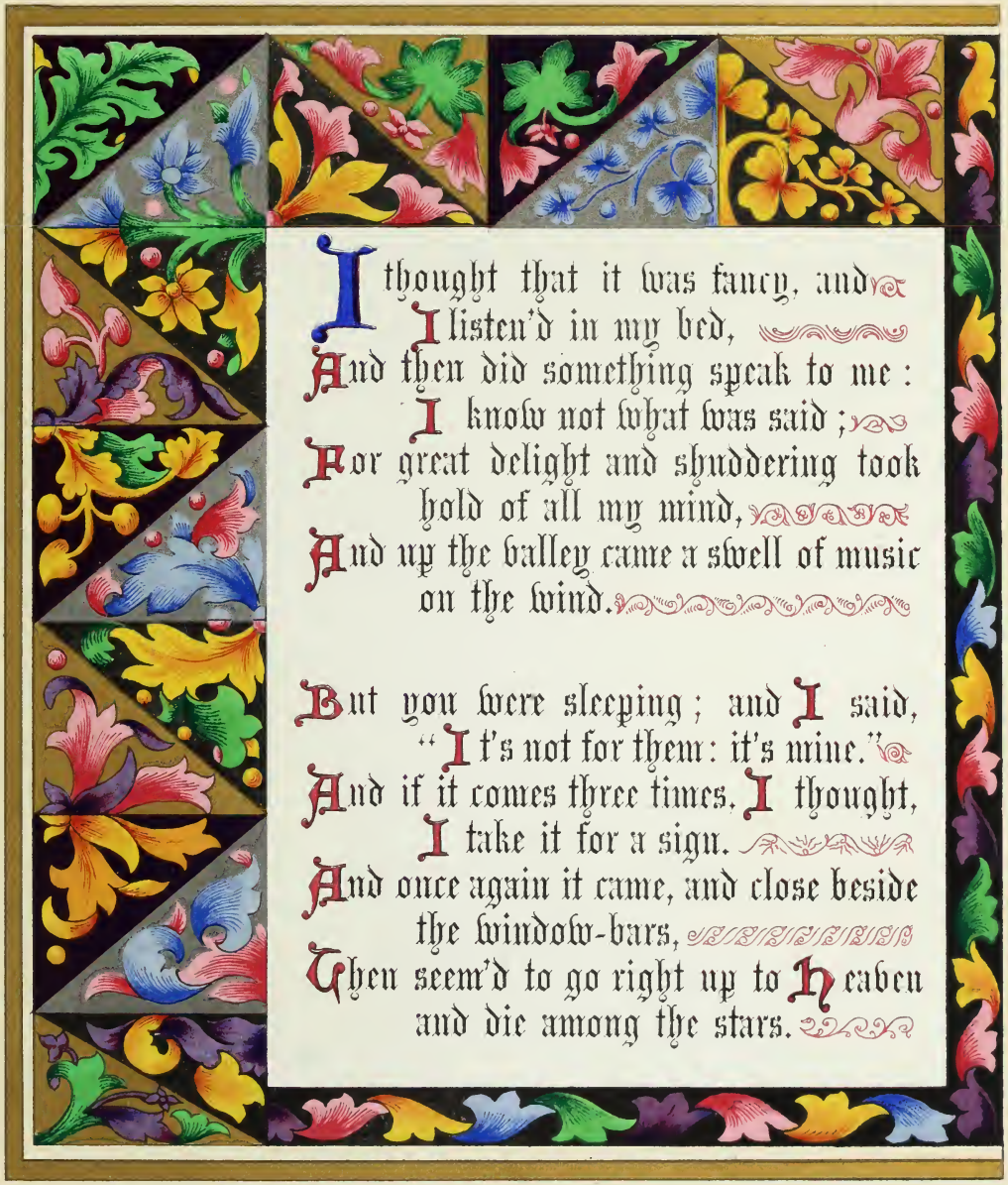
Good-night, sweet mother: call me
before the day is born.
All night I lay awake, but I fall asleep
at morn;
But I would see the sun rise upon the
glad New-Year,
So, if you 're waking, call me, call me
early, mother dear.


I thought to pass away before, and
yet alive I am,
And in the fields all round I hear the
bleating of the lamb.
How sadly, I remember, rose the
morning of the year,
To die before the snowdrop came, and
now the violet's here.
O sweet is the new violet that comes
beneath the skies,
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice
to me that cannot rise;
And sweet is all the land about, and all
the flowers that blow,
But sweeter far is death than life to me
that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to
leave the blessed sun,
And now it seems as hard to stay, and
yet His will be done!
But still I think it can't be long before
I find release;
And that good man, the clergyman, has
told me words of peace.

O blessings on his kindly voice,
and on his silver hair!
And blessings on his whole life long,
until he meet me there!
O blessings on his kindly heart and on
his silver head!
A thousand times I blessed him as he
knelt beside my bed.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother,
or the deathwatch beat;
There came a sweeter token when the
night and morning meet;
But sit beside my bed, mother, and put
your hand in mine,
And Effie on the other side, and I will
tell the sign.

All in the wild March morning
I heard the angels call,
It was when the moon was setting, and
the dark was ober all.
And the trees began to whisper, and
the winds began to roll,
And in the wild March morning
I heard them call my soul.


I thought that it was fancy, and
I listen'd in my bed,
And then did something speak to me:
I know not what was said;
For great delight and shuddering took
hold of all my mind,
And up the valley came a swell of music
on the wind.
But you were sleeping; and I said,
"It's not for them: it's mine."
And if it comes three times, I thought,
I take it for a sign.
And once again it came, and close beside
the window-bars,
Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven
and die among the stars.

O sweet and strange it seems to me
that ere this day is done
The voice that now is speaking may be
beyond the sun:
For ever and for ever, with those just
souls and true,
And what is life that we should moan.
why make we such ado?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed
home,
And there to wait a little while till you
and Effie come:
To lie within the light of God, as
I lie upon your breast.
And the wicked cease from troubling,
and the weary are at rest.

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